



St. Francis de Sales Parish

Holland, Michigan

The Ministry of Sacristan

What (is the ministry? How did it come into being?)

Sacristans provide invaluable help to the priest, allowing him to focus on offering a Mass that is orderly and prayerful. Besides helping the priest, sacristans serve the congregation so that all may participate in the Mass fully, actively, and prayerfully.

A sacristan is called to do “hidden” work, to tend to details that may hardly be noticed but are essential. Sacristans are rarely seen: they are not called to public proclamation or witness. In fact, once the liturgical service has started they are generally not seen at all, until it is over. They lead in the background by making sure all is prepared for Mass.

Besides the holiness that can be found by serving in the background, sacristans are also called to live St. Therese’s model of holiness by doing ordinary tasks with extraordinary love. Love is what makes the sacristans’ work a ministry. Love is what can transform our everyday, mundane, hidden tasks into the work of saints.

Why (is it important?)

Any public event or celebration requires much behind-the-scenes work. If the event is to have dignity and meaning, care and preparation are needed. Events which involve a large number of people do not just “happen.” Public events can inspire, but only when they have been well-prepared, when the setting and surroundings of the event have been carefully arranged, and when the people involved in the event are aware of their responsibilities.

Mass is a public event which is the heart of our parish. Everything that we do and are as a parish leads to and flows from our liturgical celebrations.

Our liturgy proclaims what we are as a parish and at the same time provides the foundation and the impetus for our working together and growing as a community of worship, witness, and service. Because of its crucial role in our parish life, the liturgy requires considerable behind-the-scenes preparation if it is to fulfill its function. A large part of this preparation is handled by the sacristan.

Who (can serve and is served?)

Sacristans are people who follow a Christian life of service to others, have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, and are joyful and grateful witnesses who give thanks for life's blessings and bring God's presence to others. Typically the required training for sacristans is done by shadowing current sacristans.

When (is the ministry to be carried out?)

Typically 30 minutes before and after Mass.

How (is the ministry performed?)

Before Mass

- Begin by praying

Prayer of Preparation for Sacristans

I will set out the vessels, Lord, prepare cups and plates, pitchers and bowls. Now they are empty, but soon they will hold the bread and wine that will become Your Body and Blood.

Make me a vessel, Lord, so I can be a sign of Your love to all I meet today. Open my heart to do my work as sacristan with care and love. Amen

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before Mass begins (45 minutes before 5:00 and 8:30 Mass). You may need less time to complete your work, but 30 minutes will give you time to work carefully and to check everything before others arrive.
- Before 5:00 & 8:30 Mass:
 - Unlock exterior doors using Allen wrench.
 - Unlock interior door at handicapped entrance.
 - Unlock interior door behind organ and turn on light in entry.
 - [8:30 Only] Unlock door to basement and door to nursery.
 - Unlock doors to main sacristy and work sacristy.
 - Turn on lights in Gathering Space, hallway near sacristy and in sanctuary.
 - Open doors from Gathering Space to Sanctuary.
 - Turn on light behind stained glass window in reconciliation room.
- Sign in with the Mass Coordinator.
- Check with the Mass Coordinator to see if the Mass will have any rites which need special preparations (e.g. sprinkling, incense).

- Check the number of hosts in the ciborium--you may need to adjust the amounts needed for the paten. Open the door of the Eucharistic Chapel until it clicks and stays open. Turn on the lights.
- On the Offertory Table (along the wall near the sacristy entrance to Church), place
 - decanter/carafe of wine. Reference chart in cabinet for wine amounts (NOTE: Mass attendance may require a larger amount of wine.)
 - for Saturday 5 pm and Sunday 8:30 am Masses, in a large paten (bowl) put:
 - Two sleeves of hosts (unless ciborium in tabernacle is full)
 - One large host on top for the priest
 - NOTE: Mass attendance may require a larger number of hosts.
 - For Sunday 10:30 and 12:30 Masses, large paten (bowl) with
 - Five sleeves of hosts (unless ciborium in tabernacle is full)
 - For the priest, one large host on top of the hosts in the large paten (bowl)
 - NOTE: Mass attendance may require a larger number of hosts.
- On the Credence Table (near the servers' chairs), put
 - The Roman Missal(s). Sometimes the celebrant will want to look at the Roman Missals. You may need to wait to put the Missals on the credence table.
 - For 5pm, put both English and Spanish Roman missals--with English on the top.
 - Large towel, pitcher with water, bowl & Tabernacle key.
 - On a tray, for Saturday 5 pm Masses
 - 6 Chalices
 - 7 purificators
 - 1 large and 1 small corporal
 - 4 patens (bowls)
 - On trays for Sunday 8:30 am Masses:
 - 8 Chalices
 - 9 purificators
 - 1 large and 1 small corporal
 - 5 patens (bowls)
 - On trays for Sunday 10:30 and 12:30 Masses:
 - 12 Chalices
 - 13 purificators
 - 1 large and 1 small corporal

- 8 patens (bowls)
- Turn on lights in the Church.
- Light altar candles 20 minutes before Mass begins.
- Turn on the microphone system if it's off (2 switches, one behind the cabinet door, one green blinking power button on the upper right of the board itself).
- Put the lectionary, Book of the Gospels, and binder with petitions and announcements on the counter in the sacristy. The lectors may want to take another look at the binder or Lectionary before Mass begins.
- 5 minutes before Mass begins, be sure you (or a lector) have put the Lectionary on the ambo stand and the binder with petitions and announcements on the cantor stand.
- The Book of the Gospel will be carried in by Lector #1.

During the Mass

- Participate fully in the Mass by listening, praying, singing, etc.

After the Mass

- Swirl a very small amount of water in the first chalice, pour the same water into the next chalice, and continue until all chalices have been purified. When all are purified, pour the water into sacrarium.
- Wash the Chalices with soap and water. For 5 pm and 12:30, put chalices away. For other Masses, put on a tray.
- Put any used purificators in the laundry area (Eucharistic ministers may have already done this). Corporals should also be put in the laundry. Please Gently shake corporals over sacrarium.
- Follow the same procedure (swirling a small amount of water) to purify the paten (bowls).
- Empty and wash the lavabo bowl and pitcher.
- After the 5pm Mass on Saturday and the 12:30 Mass on Sunday,
 - Double check to make sure the tabernacle is **locked**, and make sure the key from the tabernacle has been returned to the appropriate cabinet in the sacristy.
 - Put Chalices, bowls (patens), in the appropriate cabinet in the sacristy.
 - Lock the sacristy door.
 - If Father has returned his vestments.
 - Make sure all the candles on the altar have been extinguished.